

File - UK Nuclear

SECRET

MEMORANDUM

TO: RPM - Mr. Tobin
FROM: RPM - Robert H. Kranich *RHK*
SUBJECT: UK Nuclear Deterrent

August 10, 1962

(4)

*RHK
Seems -
promising idea
would be better to
write to P-7
of Polaris system?
but*

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The UK is making progress in reducing its nuclear role. First BLUE STREAK, now THOR, and we hope soon BLUE WATER and BLUE STEEL. These decisions to abandon presumably are based on an admixture of regard for costs, obsolescence, and vulnerability.

But what about SKYBOLT, which is just fine if the UK can get the bombers off the ground in time; if they cannot -- SKYBOLT is just as vulnerable and obsolete as THOR. To remedy this, the UK should have either a sizeable airborne continuous alert, or move *the bombers* from the island somewhere.

What would really make sense (and what would mesh into a future European deterrent) would be to start the UK on a POLARIS program immediately on condition that it (a) give up BLUE STEEL, BLUE WATER and SKYBOLT, (b) that its POLARIS force will be committed to or absorbed into the European deterrent as and when it is created, and (c) it will be targeted through the SIOP operation. Under these conditions we could afford the UK to enjoy its legal fictional right of national withdrawal during an early staging phase. I think the UK might accept this.

How would the French react? They would have less cause for objection than when we assist the UK on the latter's national nuclear programs. Perhaps we could make the same offer to them, although it is unlikely deGaulle would accept.

Copies to:
EUR - Mr. Tyler
EUR - Mr. Schaetzel
G/PM - Mr. Weiss
S/P - Mr. Owen

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